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THE ELEPHANTINE DOCUMENTS

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THE beginnings of the Jewish dispersion ascend very high. Long before the final overthrow of the two kingdoms (Israel in 722, Judah in 586) when great masses of the population were transplanted to a foreign soil (Assyria, Babylonia) the migration away from the homeland set in. For the most part it was involuntary. For centuries Palestine was the battle-field of the nations. Jewish captives were sold in the slave market and carried away to distant lands. Of sons of Judah and sons of Jerusalem sold by Tyre and Zidon to Javan we hear from the prophet Joel (4, 4-6) whose date, however, some are inclined to place very low. The Jewish invasion of the land of the Pharaohs, which resulted in the days of Philo in a population of one million souls, had its beginnings in the times of Jeremiah when, shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem, a great body of Jews, for fear of Chaldean requitals in consequence of the murder of Gedaliah, left Palestine for Egypt against the advice of the prophet who was forced to join the emigrants (Jerem. 41-43). But, in accordance with a notice in the Epistle of Aristaeas which there is no reason to doubt, there was a still earlier migration under Psammetich (probably II, 594-589 B. C.) who is said to have employed Jewish mercenaries in his war with the Ethiopians. The same writer makes mention of a subsequent, apparently voluntary, immigration

under the Persians, probably synchronous with the Persian conquest of Egypt (Cambyzes), thus long antedating the wholesale colonization of Jews by the Ptolemies. Recent finds in Assuan (the ancient Syene, $\eta\sigma$, situated at the first cataract) and the island Elephantine just across (with its fortress $\text{I}\eta\beta$, יב) go a long way toward substantiating these contentions, revealing as they do the existence of a number of Jewish colonies in Upper Egypt as far back as 494 B. C. tracing their origins to a period antedating the Persian conquest under Cambyzes; in point of fact, we shall not go amiss if we ascend still further to the times of Nebuchadrezzar. There are sufficient hints in the documents to that effect.

To the Alexandrian Jews of the time of Philo, who were denounced as aliens by an anti-Jewish gymnasiarch, these finds might have been more than welcome as containing the proof of their establishment in Egypt long ahead of the Greeks. While the importance of the records long buried, conserved we may say, beneath the dry Egyptian soil, cannot be to us of a latter-day of the same practical value, they stand unique, not yielding in interest even to the famous collection of tablets unearthed in the Amarna mound, for the wealth of historical information they contain and the light they shed on so many points of the biblical history and literature.

The documents that have come to light are now accessible to scholars in two monumental publications.¹ While

¹ Aramaic Papyri discovered at Assuan. Edited by A. H. SAYCE with the assistance of A. E. COWLEY and with appendices by W. SPIEGELBERG and SEYMOUR DE RICCI. London: ALEX. MORNING, 1906. pp. 79 + 27 phototypic reproductions.—*Aramäische Papyrus und Ostraka aus einer jüdischen Militär-Kolonie zu Elephantine*. Altorientalische Denkmäler des 5. Jahrhunderts vor Chr. Bearbeitet von EDUARD SACHAU. Leipzig: J. C. HINRICHS'sche Buchhandlung, 1911. pp. XXIX + 290 + 75 phototypic reproductions.

the Assuan papyri edited by Sayce and Cowley consist of interesting legal documents, the Elephantine records—papyri and ostraka—deciphered by Sachau by far transcend them both in the variety of their contents and in the richness of their suggestions. Of course, not even the dry sand of Egypt was able to protect these treasures against the ravages of time; only the fewest records escaped being eaten away by worms, and in many instances much skill and ingenuity had to be exercised in order to piece together the detached fragments.

The characters employed in the Aramaic documents² at once arrest our attention. They are the immediate predecessors of the so-called square script³ of our biblical manuscripts (scrolls, codices) and come nearest to the characters employed in the Palmyrene and Nabatean inscriptions.⁴ This specific script was known to us monumentally from inscriptions found in Egypt.⁵ Now from

² Occasionally we meet with demotic characters and, on certain ostraka, with late Phœnician.

³ מריבית אשה b. Jehiel, Resp. 45, 13; Prophiat Duran, *Ma'aseh Efod*, 21 (where הריבית = universally). Comp. Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*, 206; Steinschneider, *Vorlesungen über d. Kunde hebräischer Handschriften*, 1897, 29. The older name is כתב אשורי Sanhedrin 21b Munich MS.; p. Megillah 71a; comp. the adverb אשורית Iadaim 4, 5. It is clear that אשורי means Syrian, Aramaic (so R. Levi in the passage of the Palestinian Talmud referred to: על שם שעלה בידם מאשור). See Herzfeld, *Geschichte d. Volkes Isrel*, II (1863), 76-91; Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, II 2 (1876), 400 ff.; Chwolson, *Corpus Inscriptionum Hebraicarum*, 1882, 411 ff.

⁴ Comp. e. g. Lidzbarski, *Handbuch d. Nordsemit. Epigraphik*, 478, No. 1 (Table XL., 11), and 449 (Table XXIX, 1). Older (monumental) specimens of the square script are available ('Arāk-el-Emir, Gezer, the tomb of the Bene Hezir, ossuaria, Kefr Bir'im); see Chwolson, *l. c.*, 55 ff.; Lidzbarski, *l. c.*, 484 f. and the literature adduced there; Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of Samuel*, xxii ff.

⁵ Comp. Lidzbarski, *l. c.*, 448. Only the first is dated (482 B. C.).

the dates which are so numerous in our documents we learn that the script before us was current in Persian times. Accordingly, we may be certain that if we possessed the documents incorporated in the book of Ezra in their original we should find them written in the same semi-square script of the Elephantine finds. But we may go one step further. According to tradition,⁶ the employment of the square script in the scroll of the Law was an innovation by Ezra. It is certainly beyond question that in more ancient times the sacred documents were written in the script which meets us in Old Hebrew monuments⁷ and which even at a very late period continued to be used on coins⁸ and for the writing of the tetragrammaton;⁹ a modification of that script is that which the Samaritans still employ in their Torah scrolls.¹⁰ In the light of the Elephantine finds it is safe to assume that the current script in Palestine in the days of Ezra was none other than the square script in a somewhat archaic form. Tradition thus has everything on its side when it claims that Ezra introduced this script in the sacred scroll: his aim was clearly a twofold one, to make Scripture "understood of the people" and, on the other hand, to differentiate the Jewish Scriptures from the Samaritan.

⁶ Tosefta Sanhedrin 4, 7; p. Megillah 71b; b. Sanhedrin 21b f.; Zebahim 62a; Origen on Ps. 2, 2; Jerome, *Prologus galeatus*; Epiphanius, *De XII gemmis*, § 63.

⁷ Mesha, Siloam, Gezer calendar, etc.

⁸ See Stade, *Gesch. d. Volkes Israel*, II, opposite p. 376.

⁹ Comp. e. g. Aquila Ps. 103, 6 (according to C. Taylor, Cairo Genizah Palimpsests, Plate VIII) and Symmachus Ps. 68 (69), 32 (in a recently found fragment; see Mercati, "Framenti di Aquila o di Simmaco?", *Revue Biblique*, 1911, 266 ff.). See Origen on Ps. 2, 2; Jerome, *Prologus galeatus*; Burkitt-Taylor, Fragments of the Books of Kings according to the Translation of Aquila, 15 f.

¹⁰ Comp. Jerome, *Prologus galeatus*.

Another point of interest is the nature of the Aramaic language in the Persian era as it is revealed by our documents. It naturally invites comparison with the biblical Aramaic (in Daniel, but particularly in Ezra). If it can be shown that in point of archaism the Aramaic of Ezra is in no way inferior to that of the Egyptian documents the traditional date of the Aramaic narrative in Ezra and in particular the authenticity of the documents incorporated will gain support on the linguistic side at least. Now the linguistic matter proceeding from the Assuan and Elephantine finds, the latter as far as contained in Sachau's advance publication in the Proceedings of the Prussian Royal Academy of the year 1907, has been compared with the biblical Aramaic by Driver (in the 1910 edition of his *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*) and Torrey (in his *Ezra Studies*, 1910). In a review published in this magazine (1910, pp. 549, 568) I ventured to say that "it is quite conceivable that if we had access to the autographs of the Aramaic portions of Ezra, their orthography would be much the same as that of the Egyptian documents. The pronunciation of the dentals in Aramaic must have fluctuated for some time, probably for centuries; both the earlier and the later orthography failed to square with the actual pronunciation; where the one erred on the side of archaism, the other was faulty on the side of modernism." My remarks appear to be borne out by the facts as they are shown by the material now complete. The fluctuation in the pronunciation of the dentals is attested by a goodly number of modern spellings.¹¹ But, if phonetics which is dependent upon orthog-

¹¹ Sachau (p. 262) cites the following examples: דנה occasionally for זנה, דהב once for זהב; then דבחן, כרב, ארניהם, ארין and מורבחא אחרו, מורבחא

raphy offers a less certain basis for comparison, the case is different with the syntax; in respect to the latter the Aramaic of the Bible and the Aramaic of Egypt appear on the same level of archaism.¹² Nor is the nature of their vocabulary such as to place them apart. Of course, the documents exhibit a multitude of words for which no analogy can be found in the entire range of known Aramaic; that is to say, we are dealing with *hapax legomena* such as any new find will naturally bring to light.¹³ But the circumstance which is of weight is that so many words which have hitherto figured as peculiar to the Aramaic of the Bible re-appear in the Elephantine language.¹⁴ Moreover, both may be characterized as idioms partial to loan-

also דכר Assuan G, 17. With reference to the *k* representing Arabic *q* and Hebrew *s*, examples occur with the modern ' in the place thereof: by the side of ארקא we find ארעא (exactly as in Jerem. 10, 11) and once לערעה by the side of לערקה.—There is also fluctuation in the matter of the assimilation of *n* and *l*. Thus we find ככרן by the side of יקחונה, כנכרן by the side of תלקחן. The same fluctuation meets us in biblical Aramaic: יתננה by the side of ינתן (see Kautzsch, *Grammatik d. Biblisch-Aramäischen*, § 11, 2 and § 42).

¹² Thus both dialects are at one in the restriction of the *status determinatus* to its legitimate use (comp. Sachau, 266, with Kautzsch, § 79) and in the expression of the 'idāfeh (Sachau, 266 f., Kautzsch, § 80). How far the earlier usage persists in as late a dialect as talmudic Aramaic, at least in the earlier strata, has been shown in my *Manual of the Aramaic Language of the Babylonian Talmud*, §§ 43. 44.—Both dialects agree further in the use of the participle with or without הוה in the place of a finite verb (Sachau, 273, Kautzsch, § 76; comp. my *Manual*, § 58f).—Examples are available in both dialects of the object preceding the verb (Sachau, 274, Kautzsch, § 84).

¹³ Comp. the numerous words in the one epistle concerning the building of a ship (Papyrus 8) which have baffled the ingenuity of the editor.

¹⁴ So e. g. אורין, אור(א) (for which the meaning "sure, assured" is now placed beyond doubt), אל (the negative, also Zenjirli), אשרנא (meaning still dubious). בעל טעם, על דברת, comp. על דבר, רמו, נפקתא, outlay, נשחונא, ח. (י)פחיא, כענת, כען, עלותא.

words from the Persian.¹⁵ Both equally affect Hebraisms some of which they share in common;¹⁶ and these Hebraisms, though natural enough in texts proceeding from writers of Hebrew stock, are merely the sign of the older Aramaic which, the higher up it ascends, appears the less to diverge from Hebrew.¹⁷ In style and diction the similarity between the documents of Ezra and the cognate documents from Elephantine is so pronounced as to force upon us the conviction that we are dealing with products of the same period. A more welcome parallel to the language of the Aramaic portions of Ezra could hardly be wished for.

Interesting though the script and the language are in their bearing upon the biblical book of Ezra, it is indeed the matter of the new finds that must be of absorbing interest to every student of the Scriptures. Two official documents may be singled out in particular because of their direct or indirect relation to biblical narrative and biblical law. The first of these documents¹⁸ has been known for

¹⁵ Comp. the biblical lexica and Sachau, *passim*.

¹⁶ Comp. e. g. אחר, צדקה, etc.

¹⁷ Comp. Zenjirli, the Zkr inscription with its imperf. with 1 consecutive.

¹⁸ Papyrus 1 (of which Papyrus 2 is a welcome doublet in spite of its defective condition). This document is supplemented by Papyrus 3, a memorandum (זכרון) concerning the reply of Bagoas and Delaiah granting permission to rebuild the destroyed temple with the specification that מנחתא ולבונתא (meal-offerings and frankincense) may be offered upon its altar exactly as it was wont to be done in former times (לקבל זי לקדמין הוה). Inasmuch as the petition called for permission to offer burnt-offerings (עלוותא) as well as meal-offerings and frankincense (line 25; comp. line 21), the omission of the third and most important species of sacrifices is significant. Sachau believes that the omission is intentional; he therefore interprets Papyrus 5 (where the petitioners are "Jedaniah b. Gema[riah], Mauzzi b. Nathan, Shemaiah b. Haggi, Hoshea b. Jathom, Hoshea b. Nathun, all told five men, natives of Syene, [domiciled] in Jeb") as a second petition

the last four years from Sachau's advance publication; it is needless to say that in the new edition use has been made of the numerous critical reviews by scholars of renown: much has been retracted, and much on the other hand adhered to with no uncertain emphasis. The document which is dated Marheshvan 20, year 17 of Darius (II) = 407 B. C., is a petition of Jedaniah¹⁹ and his associates the priests of Jeb (Elephantine) addressed to Bagoas²⁰ (בגוי) the governor of Judea who is asked to

with a view to revoking the interdict on burnt-offerings. Line 11 of Papyrus 5 is defective and may have contained an allusion to the third species in addition to the meal-offering and frankincense which are specifically referred to. But even when this is granted, the three which are introduced by "but" (לֹא־כֵן) are manifestly contrasted with species of sacrificial animals (sheep, כֶּן = צֶאֱיִם = צֶאֱיִם; a bull, תֹּר; a goat, עֵז; מִקְלֹו which follows is difficult of identification) which are still interdicted (לֹא יִתְעַבֵּר תֹּמֶה, the ל conjectural but made certain by the adversative particle which follows). Accordingly, the interdict would remain in force with reference to all offerings of the animal kind. Perhaps this was a compromise. It may be conjectured that the powers at Jerusalem who, by their failure to answer clearly indicated their disapproval of a rebuilding of the temple, may have made protestations to the Persian government thus effecting a restricted permission with regard to sacrifices. According to the Sifre (on Deut. 12, 8) the rabbis were divided in their opinion as to what restrictions the law imposed on the *bamot* (see also Zebahim 117ab). A limited recognition is given by the Mishnah (Menahot 13, 10) to the temple of Onias (בֵּית הַזֵּנוֹי); it is implied (see Gemara 109b) that no idolatrous worship took place there. There is a reference to the incident of the destruction of the Jeb temple in a further papyrus proceeding from Elephantine which was published in 1904 by Euting (see Sachau, 26 f.). In the Assuan document E, line 14, a certain house is said to be situated near the temple of the God Jeho (יְהוֹ אֱלֹהִים).

¹⁹ Sachau writes Jedoniah. This was correct as long as he derived the verbal form from דָּוִן. But in view of the spelling יִדְנִיָּה with נ which occurs once (Papyrus 10, line 17) he now believes in a root יִדְנִי from which אֲדִנִּי "master" is to be derived. But then the reading יִדְנִיָּה is clearly impossible. Just as יִגְדֵּל corresponds to יִגְדֵּל, אֲדִנִּי would presuppose יִדְנִי.

²⁰ Thus the name is written by Josephus (*Ant.* 10, 7) who refers to him as ο σατραπης του Αραξερξου, i. e., as Sachau demonstrates on p. 7, Artaxerxes II Mnemon (404-358 B. C.).

order the restoration of the temple (אֲנוֹרָא ²¹) of יהו²² at Jeb which was destroyed in the month of Tammuz in the

²¹ Sachau points אֲנוֹרָא (I presume in view of Syriac 'agurā = Assyrian a g u r r u "later coctus") and derives the word from אָנַר "gather"; accordingly, אֲנוֹרָא means 'gatherer' (like al-jāmi' in Islam) and is the prototype of the $\sigma\sigma\nu\alpha\gamma\omega\iota\sigma\upsilon\nu$. All of which is exceedingly problematic. The spelling of the word in the Targum with ' after the א (אֲנוֹרָא , e. g. Judg. 6, 25. 28) precludes any other pointing but אֲנוֹרָא (according to the superlinear vocalization in Praetorius' edition אֲנוֹרָא in accordance with the so-called "Syriasm"); since it occurs in the Targum (Hosea 12, 12) for Hebrew גֹּל , the combination with biblical יָנַר (Gen. 31, 47) cannot be rejected. Assyrian e k u r r u "temple" has also been compared. In the Targum, only heathen altars are designated by this word. Of course, such an implication was farthest from the mind of the people of Jeb. See note 23.

²² The divine name, whether by itself or as an element of a proper name, is in all but two instances written with י at the end; it is replaced by ה Assuan E, 14 and in the proper name יְהוֹאָזִר Papyrus 30, line 2. Of course, the spelling with ה precludes the vowel ā at the end (so Sachau previously) and suggests the vowel ō . Sachau reads now Jaho, יְהוֹ , and even goes to the length of assuming that in the יְהוֹה (Mesha Stone, line 18, and inferentially in Scripture) we have a case of a redundant vowel letter and that we should read יְהוֹה . Sachau apparently thinks of the Greek transliteration Iaw (see Baudissin, *Studien z. semitischen Religionsgeschichte*, I (1876), 181 ff.; Deissmann, *Bibelstudien*, 1893, 6). But the Greek a may very well represent Hebrew ā (comp. ισαουαθι יְשׁוּעָתִי in Origen; see *AJSL.*, XXVI (1909), 66). In the light of all that has been written on the pronunciation of the tetragrammaton (comp. the summary by G. F. Moore, article "Jehovah," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th edition, 1911) we may safely adhere to the vocalization יְהוֹה which is supported by Greek transliterations and by internal grammatical considerations (יְהוֹ in combination, יְהִ). The יְהִ which appears in combination points grammatically to the longer form יְהוֹה (comp. יְצִ from יְצוֹה), a Piel form proving יְהוֹה to be a Hifil. The Elephantine Jews probably pronounced the name יְהוֹ also when occurring by itself. In English transliteration: Jeho.

year 14 of Darius (410 B. C.) by the priests²³ of the god הנוב who had made common cause²⁴ with an official²⁵ by the name of וירנני. They inform the governor that at the time of the misfortune they sent letters to Johanan the highpriest and his associates the priests in Jerusalem as well as to אוסת the brother of Anani (ענני²⁶) and the Judean nobles (חרי יהודיא) and, on the other hand, to Delaiah and Shelemiah the sons of Sanballat (סנאבלט) the governor of Samaria; they state distinctly that the letter to Jerusalem remained unanswered. We recognize immediately two biblical personages, Johanan the highpriest²⁷

²³ While they designate their own priests as כהניא, thus putting them on a level with their colleagues in Jerusalem (see line 18), they purposely choose the opprobrious term כמריא for the priests of the Egyptian deity. The same distinction is maintained in Scripture (the emendation כמריי ויעמי in Hosea 4, 4 must of course be rejected; the prophet addresses himself in the context to the "legitimate" priests), in the Targum, and in later Hebrew (see the lexica). The name is transliterated as *χωμαριμ* (implying the pronunciation *למריים*, comp. the example cited by Kahle, *Der MT. des AT. nach der Überlieferung d. babylon. Juden*, 1902, 71) in the Septuagint IV Kingd. 23, 5 (but Lucian: *απεις*) and in Theodotion Zeph. 1, 4. As is well known, no such opprobrium attaches to the appellation in the older Aramaic or in Syriac (see Lidzbarski's Glossary and the Syriac lexica). The priests of Jeb were conscious of the difference between them and the idolatrous Egyptian priests.

²⁴ See Sachau on המונית which remains difficult. But the general sense is clear.

²⁵ פרתרן derived from the comparative *fratarā*, whereas the biblical פרתמים goes back to the superlative *fratama* (Sachau).

²⁶ If this ענני is to be identified with the son of Elioenai the descendant of Jeconiah (I Chron. 3, 24), אוסתן will have been the Iranian surname of one of his six brothers mentioned in the same place. There is no need of assuming that Elioenai had eight sons (Sachau). But the identification is problematic. Suffice it to say that Anani must have been an important personage.

²⁷ According to Nehem. 12, 22 Johanan (יונחן, *ibid.*, 11 has long been recognized as a corruption from יוחנן) was the successor (son)

and Sanballat the governor of Samaria, Nehemiah's arch-enemy²⁸ with whom, however, the highpriestly family was related by marriage (a son of Joiada, hence a brother of Johanan, married a daughter of Sanballat).²⁹ Whether Sanballat was still alive at the time when our petition was written, as Sachau assumes, may reasonably be doubted. Why, it may be asked, did the Jews of Elephantine dispatch a letter to his sons Delaiah and Shelemiah and not to Sanballat in person? Perhaps his sons did not succeed him in the official dignity of governor, though as sons of the former governor they must have enjoyed a leading position in their community. As outsiders, the Jews of Jeb may not have known or cared about the feuds between Samaria and Jerusalem; to judge from the friendly feeling between the highpriestly family at Jerusalem and Sanballat, the enmity could not have been an acute one and may not have survived Nehemiah. On the whole, the Elephantine document is helpful in establishing the date of Nehemiah's activity beyond a shadow of doubt (see note 27).

of Joiada who in turn succeeded his father Eliashib (see verse 10 f.; in v. 23 **יוחנן בן אלישיב** is an abbreviated expression) who was the contemporary of Nehemiah (see Nehem. 3, 1 and chapter 13). During Nehemiah's second visit to Jerusalem which took place some time after 433 B. C. (13, 6; see the commentaries) Eliashib was still highpriest; the interval of time between that date and 410, some twenty years, would make room for his two successors. Probably Joiada's ministration was a short one (hence the phrasing 12, 23). Thus the Elephantine document goes to prove that the Artaxerxes of Nehemiah was indeed the First (Longimanus, 464-424 B. C.), and the date of Nehemiah's activity is made certain beyond cavil. Josephus (*Ant.* 10, 7) likewise places Johanan's priesthood in the times of Bagoas.

²⁸ Nehem. 2, 19 and *passim*.

²⁹ Nehem. 13, 28.

According to the document, the temple of Jeb had been in existence since the days of the kings³⁰ of Egypt, that is, was built when Egypt was still autonomous long before the advent of Cambyses (כנבוֹי) who on entering Egypt found the temple standing and, "whereas the temples of the gods of Egypt were destroyed, no hurt was ever done by any man to their own sanctuary." This account unmistakably testifies to the friendliness of the Persian kings for the Jewish religion and is an indirect proof for the authenticity of the Cyrus edict of Ezra 6 the veracity of which has been challenged on flimsy grounds.³¹ What Cambyses and the satrap of Darius II could grant to the Jews of Egypt, Darius I and before him Cyrus might certainly be expected to do for the Jews of Jerusalem. The petition of the Jewish elders in Ezra 5 is similar in language, style, and tenor to the Elephantine document. The Jews had their enemies; but their protestations proved futile at the Persian court.

So far the Bible and the new finds square admirably well. But what about the Egyptian temple and the law of Deuteronomy (ch. 12) which renders the existence of a sanctuary alongside that of Jerusalem illegal? Much has been written on this question since Sachau's first publication. It has been maintained that the Deuteronomic code must have been unknown to the Egyptian Jewish colony and hence must have been promulgated after their emigration from their homeland. Nay, the law restricting the sanctu-

³⁰ Read מלכי with Papyrus 2. The whole passage reads as follows: וּמִן יוֹמֵי מַלְכֵי מִצְרַיִם אֲבָהֵינוּ בָּנוּ אֱנוֹרָא זֶה בֵּית בִּירְתָּא וְכֹזֵי כְנֻבוֹי עַל לְמִצְרַיִם אֱנוֹרָא זֶה בֵּיתָּהּ הַשְׁכָּחָהּ וְאֱנוֹרָי אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם לֹל מִגְרוּ וְאִישׁ מִנְדַּעֲם בְּאֱנוֹרָא זֶה לֹא תִפֹּל.

³¹ See the spirited defense against Kusters and others by Eduard Meyer, *Entstehung des Judenthums*, 1896, whose position is now singularly substantiated by the Egyptian finds.

ary to a single place must have been unknown before the promulgation of Deuteronomy. For had the Egyptian Jews known of such a law they would not have contravened it. Now, with reference to these contentions two points must be had in mind. In the first place, the redactor of the Book of Kings who, it is conceded, wrote with Deuteronomy before him, clearly admits that the law of the single sanctuary had not been in force before 621 and that the "high-places" were tolerated even by the pious kings of Judah. The Egyptian Jews merely followed the custom as they knew it; whether a law had ever existed "on paper" as the Deuteronomist redactor of Kings assumed, it was beyond their ken to ascertain or to trouble themselves about. If, as we shall see in the sequel, the worship at the temple of Jeb was by no means free from objectionable features, the status of the Jeb community would correspond to what Jeremiah has to say about the idolatrous propensities of the very Jews who may have constituted the ancestors, physical or spiritual, of the Elephantine Jews. They were recruited from the rural districts in which each community had its "bamah," its own god,³² as Jeremiah expresses himself. For so much will be clear, whatever the final word may be on the origin and date of the constituent parts of the Pentateuch—it is largely a literary question—that a reformation like the Josianic could have ripened only at the end of a long contest extending over centuries perhaps; that therefore alongside of the easy-going tendency in favor of the "bamot" there must have gone on a movement which looked upon them with disfavor and which, starting from above, reached the people below but slowly, though in the end it won the day. Whether or no Jere-

³² Jerem. 2, 28.

miah took an active part in the promulgation of Deuteronomy,³³ he certainly was no friend of the "bamot";³⁴ and just as surely the bulk of the emigrants with whom he went down to Egypt were unable to perceive what wrong there was in building a temple on foreign soil, as little as they were in a position to see any wrong in offering sacrifices to the queen of heaven.³⁵ The second point is that the Law³⁶ which was a constitution for the people in their homeland made no provision for an emergency like the one which presented itself to the exiles in Egypt. What Onias did in later times—and his temple was not altogether put under the ban by the doctors of the Mishnali (see note 18)—the Elephantine Jews did long before him. It has been suggested that Onias did not build a new temple, but attached himself to one of the Jewish sanctuaries which existed in Egypt.³⁷ No one will certainly maintain that Onias was ignorant of Deuteronomy. Friedmann³⁸ has long recognized that in Ezek. 20 we have an echo of the

³³ Jerem. 11.

³⁴ Jerem. 7, 31; 11, 13 and elsewhere.

³⁵ Jerem. 44.

³⁶ The "Urdeuteronomium." In the parenetic framework (Deut. 4; 28-30) the exile and even the restoration are included in the prophet's vista. The composition of the Code must have preceded its discovery by a long stretch of time if its provisions proved unworkable so soon after its promulgation.

³⁷ Whether or no the prophecy Isa. 19, 19 refers to the Onias temple is a disputed point. Cheyne (Introduction to Isaiah, 1895, 105 ff.) places it in the latter years of Ptolemy Lagi. It is interesting to observe how difficulties real or imaginary are brushed aside in order to reconcile the prophecy in question with post-deuteronomic usages and ideas. The least difficulty, it seems to me, is the conflict with the law of the single sanctuary. Prophets were not so bound to the letter of an ancient law as modern commentators would make us believe they were; hence a law need not be placed late because some prophet seems to ignore or even to contradict it.

³⁸ *Ezekiel. Capitel 20.* W. 1888.

struggle between the prophet and the elders of the Golah; while the latter deemed the construction of a temple on Babylonian soil advisable, Ezekiel bent his entire energy to kill the project: in Babylonia there was room for a "little sanctuary,"³⁹ perhaps a place of assembly, a sort of synagogue, but the great temple was to be built on the heights of Zion.⁴⁰ It may be questioned whether the Egyptian Jews who refused to listen to Jeremiah's rebukes would have given heed to the counsels of an Ezekiel, had such a one been among them. It is certainly characteristic that Johanan the highpriest did not make reply to the letter dispatched by the Elephantine colony. Whatever the attitude of Samaria was, Jerusalem was lukewarm about resurrecting a "bamah" in Egypt.

If any commentary were needed as to the apprehensions which were felt by priests and prophets concerning the local sanctuaries or as regards the religious mixture (syncretism) which went on there, the Elephantine finds admirably supply the want. The temple at Jeb was dedicated to the worship of Jehu, the God of heaven; but with him homage was paid to other deities. Our information comes principally from the great list of names which constitutes Papyrus 18. The document which is perhaps not wholly extant is headed: "In the third of Pamenhotep in the year 5. These are the names of the Jewish host" who

³⁹ Ezek. 11, 16.

⁴⁰ Ezek. 20, 40.

⁴¹ **הילא יהודיא**. The phrase occurs elsewhere, so in the Passover rescript. See the reference to the Epistle of Aristeas at the head of this paper. The Elephantine colony was originally a military one. Hence the divisions which are called **חילין** (see G. Buchanan Gray on Num. 2, 2). There were altogether six such companies of which five occur in the Assuan Papyri and one in the Elephantine documents. Four are named after officers bearing Iranian names (Warezat, Artaban, Aturparan, Homadat), while the

gave silver to Jehu the God, every one two shekels of silver." But in the summary (column 7) we read that of the 31 keresh and 8 shekels contributed only 12 keresh and 6 shekels went to Jehu, while 7 keresh were donated to אשמביתאל and 12 keresh to ענתביתאל. Of these two deities the second is perspicuous enough. ענתביתאל, formed exactly in the same manner as עשתר כמש (Mesha Stone, line 17), is apparently a goddess, the consort of the god ביתאל. That a god ביתאל (in the syncretistic system possibly identified with יהו) was worshiped by the Elephantine colony is evidenced by such proper names as ביתאלנתן, ביתאלעקב.⁴² In the Bible we meet with the name ביתאל Zechar. 7, 12 (the accents are intentionally misleading);⁴³ comp. also Jerem. 48, 13; "And Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel their confidence," where Bethel is placed on a level with Chemosh. As for ענת, the first element of the combination, it occurs in the Bible in names of persons and places,⁴⁴ but outside Scripture, on Phoenician monuments for instance, as the name of a goddess which is identified with Athena.⁴⁵ An-at is of course the female

names of the officers after whom the other two companies are called are Babylonian (Iddinnabu, Nabukudurri); according to Sachau, they were likewise placed in command by the Persian government. The companies appear further to have been divided into bodies of a hundred men (מאתא). At the time from which our documents emanate over against the בעלי דגלן appear the בעלי קריה, i. e. citizens who are not soldiers.

⁴² Comp. יהונתן, בלעקב, נבועקב (Sachau, 82).

⁴³ Stade long ago suspected in the combination one name; see Stade-Siegfried, *Hebr. Wbch.*, 1893, 832a; his emendation בלשראצר is repeated *ZAW.*, XXII (1902), 328. It is the merit of Peiser (*OLZ.*, 1901, col. 306 f.) to have recognized in ביתאל the name of a deity and in the whole the equivalent of *Baitil-šar-ušur*.

⁴⁴ See Baethgen, *Beiträge z. semit. Religionsgeschichte*, 1888, 52 f.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 53.

counterpart to An-u, the Babylonian god of heaven, though the occurrence of a goddess Antu(m) in Babylonian is doubted;⁴⁶ Anu was regarded as the father of Ishtar,⁴⁷ and it is thought that the latter is meant by "the queen of heaven" in Jeremiah;⁴⁸ it is just as likely, however, that the name of the queen of heaven was Anat.⁴⁹ But whether the one or the other, the association of a goddess-consort with יהו is strongly reminiscent of the religious attitude of the Jews that went down to Egypt with Jeremiah. Elsewhere in the documents we meet with ענתיהו⁵⁰ whose identity with ענתביתאל may be assumed. It is not so easy to place the first element in the combination אשמביתאל, though אשימא of II Kings 17, 30 will naturally suggest itself.⁵¹ Were it not for the fact that the men of Jeb refer to themselves as Judeans⁵² one would be tempted to associate them with the later Samaritans. But in the light of what we know from Jeremiah, syncretistic cults obtained in the local sanctuaries of Judah as well. Another deity combined with ביתאל is הרמביתאל;⁵³ comp. also the proper name הרמנתן.⁵⁴ The Elephantine Jews could apparently boast of a pantheon; thus a standing formula in their documents is: "the gods (and even "all the gods") may inquire after your welfare," and it is used in domestic communications by one Jew to another.⁵⁵

⁴⁶ See *KAT.*, 3d ed., 352.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 441.

⁴⁹ Sachau, 84.

⁵⁰ Papyrus 32, line 3.

⁵¹ Erman apud Sachau, 83.

⁵² See Sachau, Index, s. v. יהודיא. At the same time they designate themselves as Arameans (see Index, s. v. ארמי).

⁵³ Papyrus 27, line 7.

⁵⁴ Papyrus 34, line 4.

⁵⁵ See Sachau, 38.

The second official document in which students of the Bible will evince much interest is the Passover rescript (Papyrus 6). It is unfortunately sadly mutilated; but, in view of its importance, it may be reproduced here in full.

1.

2. Jeda[niah] and his associates, the [J]ew[is]h h[ost],
your brother Hanan[iah]. The peace of my brethren
the gods (may)

3. And now, in this year, the year 5 of Darius the king,
there has been sent by the king to Arsa[m]es] (a com-
munication)

4. Now count ye thus fou[r]...

5. gua[rd] (yourselves), and from the day 15 to
the day 21 of

6. be ye clean, and guard yourselves, work (ye shall)
n[ot]

7. ye shall [no]t drink, and whatsoever is leavened (ye
shall) n[ot]

REVERSE

8. (from) the setting of the sun to the day 21 of
Nisa[n]

9. (ye shall) enter your chambers and seal (?) be-
tween the days

10.

11. my brethren Jedaniah and his associates, the Jewish
host, your brother Hananiah

The identity of Hananiah, the sender of the dispatch, cannot be ascertained. He may be the Hananiah mentioned in Papyrus 11 (a letter from Abydos—אבוס—to the community in Elephantine), line 7: "from the time that Hananiah came to Egypt even until now." But the general purport of the document which is dated from the fifth year of Darius, i. e. 419-18 B. C., is clear. It is a sort of pastoral letter ordering the celebration of the Passover. Sachau thinks that the phraseology attaches itself more closely to Deut. 16 than to Exod. 12. I cannot say that his arguments are convincing. It is certainly far-fetched to see in the expression "enter your chambers" an allusion to "and go unto thy tents" Deut. 16, 7. "To enter" is not "to go," and "chambers"⁵⁶ are not "tents." "Count ye" (line 4)⁵⁷ is the exact counterpart of "ye shall make your count"⁵⁸ Exod. 12, 4, comp. Targum Onkelos,⁵⁹ Septuagint,⁶⁰ and the halakic works.⁶¹ In line 7, supply with Strack⁶² "beer"; he compares Pesahim 3, 1 (ויתום המצרי "Egyptian beer"; ויתום is of course ζῆθος, a word derived from the same root from which we obtain the Greek word for leaven; it occurs by the way once in the Septuagint, Isa. 19, 10, where the translator read שֶׁכֶר for שֶׁכָּר; comp. שֶׁכֶר המדי Mishnah, *ibid.*). The document has also an indirect bearing on the edict of Artaxerxes in Ezra 7. If an internal matter of the Jewish religion like the keeping of the

⁵⁶ Comp. Syriac and Targumic תונא = חדר and Hebrew תא.

⁵⁷ מנו.

⁵⁸ מכסת, comp. תכסו.

⁵⁹ תתמנון (and for the noun מנין).

⁶⁰ σκαρτεμενται (and αρτεμον).

⁶¹ Both recensions of the Mekilta (אין מכסת אלא מנין).—Perhaps יא on line 4 should be restored to read אמריא.

⁶² *Pesahim*, 1911, 7.*

Passover could be made the subject of a royal rescript to the king's representative in Egypt, Ezra's work of organizing the departure of a large body of Jews to Palestine and of consolidating the inner juridical affairs of Jerusalem in accordance with "the law of his God" was certainly a matter for the consideration of the king. It once more reveals the liberal politics of the Achæmenian rulers and their friendly solicitude for the Jewish religion.⁶³

Of the other documents which the Elephantine find has brought to light, the legal documents, private letters, and much else, though shedding much light on the life of the Egyptian Jews of those by-gone days, need not detain us. The best preserved is a promissory note (Papyrus 28).⁶⁴ We shall single out here two pieces which should command universal interest. The one is of a literary character, a book, or what in the imperfect condition of the writing material now remains of it. The Jews of Elephantine were not only able to handle the Aramaic for commercial, official, and private purposes, but also for literary objects. They possessed a literature, and that in the Aramaic which they spoke and wrote. It is a pity that but one sample of their literary possessions has come down to us. But that specimen is none other than the Book of the Wise Aḥikar.⁶⁵ The name is familiar to us from the apocryphal

⁶³ See Eduard Meyer, *Entstehung d. Judent.*, 21; *Geschichte d. Alterthums*, III (1901), 94 f.

⁶⁴ שְׁהֲרִיָּא בְּגִי (the phrase occurs elsewhere) should be explained in accordance with Baba batra 10, 1: מְתוּכָּו עָרִי פְּשׁוּט בְּגִי.

⁶⁵ The name is written in our documents אַחִיקַר (e. g. Papyrus 49, line 1). Correctly transliterated in the Sinaiticus and the Old Latin (Ἀχικαρ(ος), *Achicarus*). See Müller, *Beiträge z. Erklärung und Kritik d. Buches Tobit*, 1908, 15; Smend, *Alter und Herkunft d. Achikar-Romans* (continuation of the preceding work), 57, note; Nau, *Histoire et sagesse d'Aḥikar l'Assyrien*, 1909, 7 (see in all three the further disfigurements which the name underwent in various languages in the course of the transmission of the story).

Book of Tobit where he is spoken of as Esarhaddon's chief cupbearer and keeper of the signet and steward and overseer of the accounts in which capacity he had served also his father Sennacherib.⁶⁶ Upon the recommendation of Ahikar, his uncle Tobit is brought to Nineveh;⁶⁷ he nurses him in his sickness;⁶⁸ together with Nadab his brother's son he appears at the wedding feast of Tobias, the son of Tobit.⁶⁹ When upon his deathbed Tobit admonishes his son to show himself merciful and righteous, he draws his attention to the example of their illustrious kinsman: "See, my son, what Nadab did to Ahikar, who nourished him, did he not go down alive into the earth? and God repaid his shame to his face. And Ahikar went forth into the light, but Nadab entered the everlasting darkness, because he sought to slay Ahikar. For that he did righteousness to me, he went forth out of the snare of death which Nadab had set for him, but Nadab fell into the snare of death and it destroyed him."⁷⁰ What is here a mere episode was known in early Christian literature in the form of a book; versions thereof in Syriac, Armenian, Arabic, and Slavonic are extant.⁷¹ Now we meet with it in Aramaic. Whether it is itself a translation (from Assyrian or Hebrew?) it is impossible to tell. It resembles the versions extant in its main features; but naturally often goes its own way. It consists of the story of the wise minister and

⁶⁶ Tobit 1, 21.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁶⁸ 2, 10.

⁶⁹ 11, 18.

⁷⁰ 14, 10 according to the Sinaiticus.

⁷¹ Edited by F. C. Conybeare, J. Rendel Harris, and Agnes Smith Lewis (*The Story of Ahikar from the Syriac, Arabic, Armenian, Ethiopic, Greek and Slavonic Versions*, Cambridge 1898). On the relation to Aesop see the publications cited in note 65 and the literature referred to in them.

his ungrateful adopted son Nadin⁷² as well of a didactic series of proverbs and fables.⁷³ The whole is written in an easy style befitting a book intended for popular edification. The papyri are defective. The editor has done as well as it was possible for him to do with the material in hand. It will require some further painstaking study, and here and there a point overlooked by Sachau may be rectified. Thus the editor has failed to recognize in מן כל מנמרה טר פמך (Papyrus 54, line 4) the almost verbal agreement with Prov. 4, 23a: מכל משמר נצר לך. Sachau renders: "Von jeder Warte aus wache über deinen Mund"; it should rather be translated: "Above all that thou guard—est guard thy mouth." To אל תהחשך בך מן חמר (Papyrus 53, line 3), "Keep not thy son from the rod," the parallel from Prov. 13, 24 naturally suggested itself to the editor; he might have cited for the next line הן אמחאנך ברי לא (Prov. 23, 13b. Papyrus 55, line 2 פון is clearly impossible—a plough is nothing light—; read פון "bran" (comp. Syriac *parrē* and Talmudic פארי Baba batra 92b and elsewhere) = סובין Baba batra 98b in the proverb ascribed to Bar Sira which in its formulation

הכל שקלתי בכף מאזנים	ולא מצאתי קל מסובין
וקל מסובין	חתן הדור בבית חמיו

(see Schechter, *JQR.*, III (1891), 691)

comes nearer to the Papyrus text than to the parallel Syriac quoted by Sachau.—*Ibid.*, line 12; comp. Jerem. 10, 23.—*Ibid.*, line 13. The example cited on p. 168 from Onkelos (Deut. 28, 56) is not analogous. נִסְתָּה = נִסְיָתָה.—*Ibid.*,

⁷² To which the Nadab (*Nadaß* = *Nadau* = *Nadav*) of the Sinaiticus comes nearest. See Müller, 11-13; Nau, 8 f.

⁷³ The whole (story and didactic part) on Papyri 49-59.

line 14; comp. Prov. 5, 21.—*Ibid.*, line 15: איש מצלח עקן ולא חזה does not mean “lässt jemand Bäume gedeihen in der Finsternis, und nicht sieht (wird gesehen?),” but “a man that cleaveth” wood in the darkness, and seeth not”; such a man will naturally hurt himself,⁷⁴ so will the thief who steals under the covert of the night (comp. Job 24, 16 and 15*b*). Papyrus 56, line 3, the editor is at a loss to supply the first letter; the text reads גנת קשתר. Sachau operated with מתח as an equivalent of Hebrew דרך; but in the Targum Ps. 11, 2; 58, 8; 64, 4 the verb is נגר; hence read גנת = נגרת (the *d* assimilated to the *t*): “thou hast bent the bow.” Papyrus 56, column 2, line 6, reads אל תסתכל כביר; Sachau renders “Lass dich nicht erkennen als einen grossen (Herrn)” —certainly a harsh construction. Here Sachau operates with the Syriac; but משכלתנו Dan. 5, 11. 12. 14 and משתכל 7, 8 (hence ס for the biblical ש) should suggest the rendering: “Make not thyself over wise,” comp. אל תתחכם יותר Eccles. 7, 16. Papyrus 57, line 1, we should perhaps point עמך, “with thee.” *Ibid.*, line 15, comp. Job. 3, 24.

In 1896 Eduard Meyer expressed the opinion⁷⁵ that, in accordance with the custom of the Achæmenian rulers, an Aramaic translation must have accompanied royal inscriptions in Syria or Asia Minor, if there were such. The Elephantine finds have brought to light an Aramaic version of the Behistun inscription which Darius I caused to be hewn in the rock in three languages, the Ancient Persian, the Elamitic, and the Assyrian. Sachau who rightly remarks that a translation of that famous inscription was

⁷⁴ Comp. e. g. Gen. 22, 3 Onkelos.

⁷⁵ Comp. Eccl. 10, 9.

⁷⁶ *Entstehung d. Judent.*, 10.

least expected on the confines of Egypt and Nubia finds that the Elephantine version corresponds most closely to the Assyrian text; the general impression which the style of the translation makes upon him is that it was not the work of a private man, but from the beginning bore official character. We must therefore assume that immediately upon the publication of that document copies in translation were sent to the various nationalities of the empire, as the writer of the Book of Esther expresses himself,⁷⁷ "into every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language." Sachau prints in parallel columns his own German translation of the Aramaic and the English translation by King and Thompson of the Assyrian text.

The editor of the Elephantine finds merits the gratitude of all students of antiquity and in particular of all Bible readers, whether scholars or laymen, for the celerity with which so difficult a publication has been accomplished. How much there is yet to be done by way of mere verbal interpretation Sachau knows full well; it is so much the more to his credit that he chose not to delay the publication. The volume devoted to the texts and learned notes is accompanied by a separate folder containing facsimiles in photographic reproduction of all the texts; thus students all the world over are placed in a position to verify Sachau's readings and to submit the documents to fresh editions and commentaries of which the near future is destined to see not a few. The well-known publishing firm of Hinrichs in Leipzig deserves praise for the sumptuous appearance given to this monumental publication.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ 1, 22.

[⁷⁸ Since writing the above, I have received through the author's courtesy a paper by Felix Perles printed in *OLZ.*, XIV (1911), col. 497-503. I find

that he has anticipated me in two points (on Papyrus 54, l. 4 and 55, l. 15). Quite plausible is his restoration שדכי'ן (Papyrus 6, l. 6); accordingly render "be ye at rest" for "be ye clean."—The correct interpretation of קן and תור in note 18 I have derived from Lidzbarski's review in *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, No. 47, Nov. 25, 1911.—A smaller edition of the text of the Elephantine documents with notes has been prepared by Ungnad and may be had for the price of M. 3.40. The publisher is HINRICHS.]